

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONSOLIDATED PLAN

PURPOSE

The Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan (H&CD Plan), incorporates the planning and reporting for four federal community planning and development programs, with the goal that communities will find it easier to understand these programs and use them to address housing and community development needs. The Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG), and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) are included in the H&CD Plan, which allows a single grant application to be submitted.

The goals of the programs addressed in the H&CD Plan reflect the major commitments and priorities of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These include: 1) decent housing; 2) a suitable living environment; and 3) expanded economic opportunities. The purpose of the H&CD Plan is to incorporate planning functions for these three broad activities, and to consolidate the local applications and reporting processes for federal entitlement programs. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship of the local funding processes and the H&CD Plan.

However, the Clark County/City of Vancouver H&CD Plan is more than just a reporting document; it is also a strategic plan that outlines a specific course of action for revitalization. It provides the means to analyze the local context and linkages to the larger region. The Plan builds on local assets and coordinates a response to the needs of the community. It attempts to integrate economic, physical, environmental, community and human development in a comprehensive manner. As a strategic plan, it also sets forth goals, objectives, and performance indicators for measuring progress and establishing a framework for assessing new knowledge and experience, and identifies how they can add to a successful plan for revitalization. Additional information about the strategic plan is found in Chapter Four.

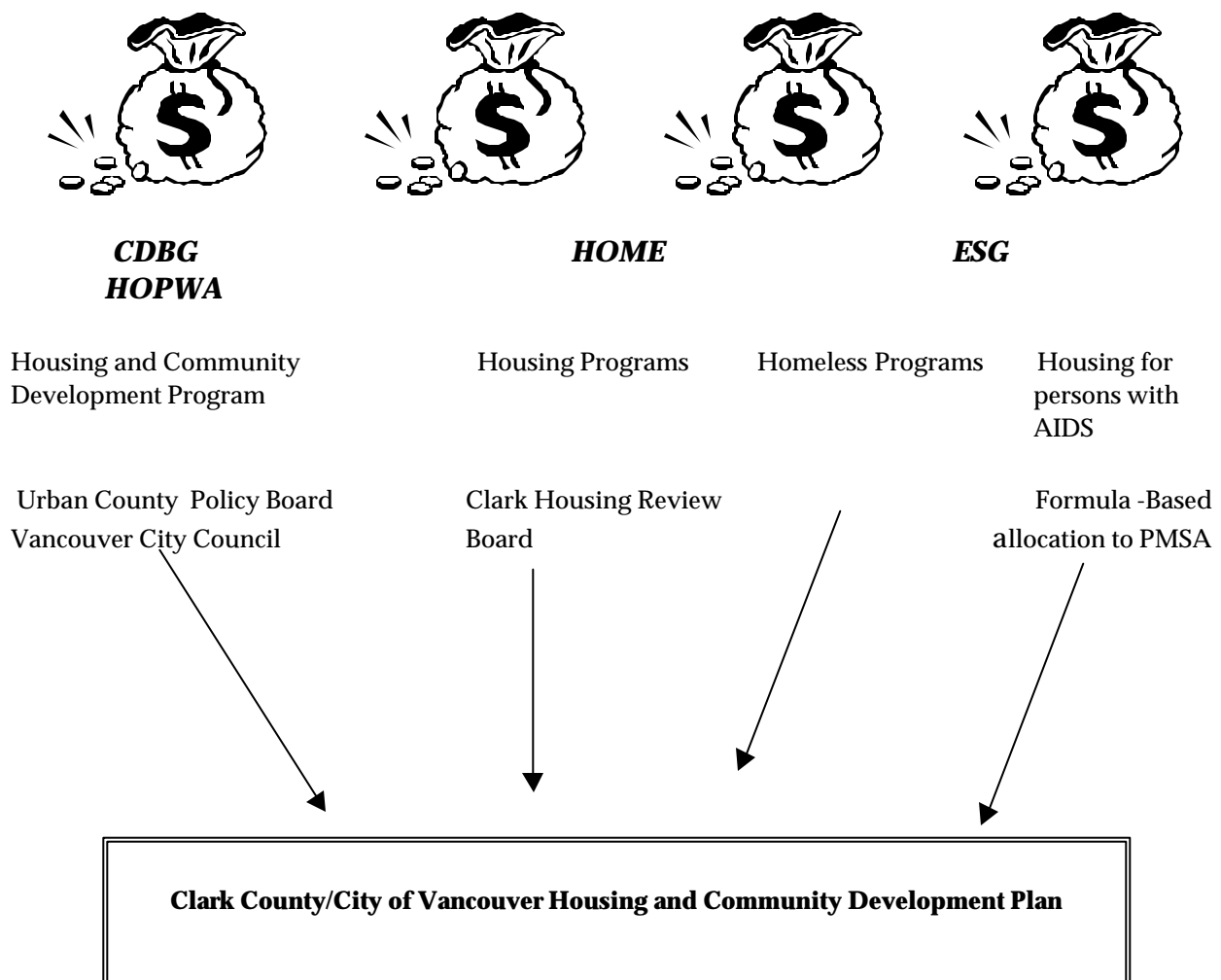
Clark County and the City of Vancouver prepares the 2000-2004 H&CD Plan for the following federal funding sources and jurisdictions:

- **Clark County/City of Vancouver Community Development Block Grant Program.** CDBG funds are primarily for housing and community development projects that benefit low- and moderate-income households. The Clark County CDBG entitlement area also

represents the cities of Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Washougal, Vancouver, and Yacolt, the unincorporated areas of Clark County, and the City of Woodland. The Urban County Policy Board, comprised of one County Commissioner and the Mayors from each incorporated city represented, recommends allocation of the funds for the county and Vancouver City Council allocates the city funds.

- **Clark County/City of Vancouver HOME Investment Partnership Program.** Clark County/City of Vancouver HOME funds are generally used for the development of low- and moderate-income housing. Funding decisions are made by the Clark Housing Review Board.

FIGURE 1
Federal U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Funds Allocated Through the Consolidated Plan



- **Clark County Emergency Shelter Grant Program.** ESG funds are used for services and facilities that benefit homeless persons and families. The Clark County ESG entitlement area includes all of the incorporated cities within the County, as well as the unincorporated areas and the City of Woodland. Clark County does not receive a direct ESG allocation. Funds are obtained through a competitive process from the State of Washington.
- **Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program.** HOPWA funds provide supportive housing services for persons with AIDS. Clark County is not the lead applicant for HOPWA funds for the area, but receives funds through an Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area (EMSA). For Clark County, the EMSA administrator is Portland, Oregon.

The Planning Process

The Clark County/City of Vancouver H&CD planning process draws from a wide range of sources and integrates a variety of planning processes. The intent is not to duplicate existing efforts, but rather to build on them. The H&CD Plan incorporates existing plans and documents, identified below, and is meant to be consistent with the policies and programs presented in those plans. In addition, the planning process includes a broad base of citizen input, which is gathered from public meetings, focus groups conducted for other planning programs, citizen input for the Growth Management Plan, and a housing survey of citizens. A more detailed listing of the reference documents used to develop the H&CD is located in Appendix B.

Figure 2 illustrates the planning process for the Clark County/City of Vancouver H&CD Plan, which builds on and incorporates the planning and strategies developed from the following sources:

- **1995-2000 Clark County/City of Vancouver Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan.**
The H&CD Plan contains an updated needs assessment from the 1995-2000 H&CD Plan and incorporates many of the strategies and actions outlined in previous H&CD Plans.
- **Clark County 20-Year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.**
In January 1995, after an extensive 2-year planning process, Clark County adopted its first 20-Year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan (20-Year Plan), in compliance with the 1990 Washington State Growth Management Act. The H&CD Plan integrates

the housing and community development policies and priorities. In addition, its objectives are intended to be consistent with and work in conjunction with, the activities outlined in the 20-Year Plan.

The Housing Element of the 20-Year Plan describes needs and the direction the county will take to influence the type, location, and affordability of housing. The issues addressed include development standards, fair share housing, special needs housing, neighborhood character, and vitality.

Other elements of the 20-Year Plan describe the investment in public infrastructure needed to support the land use, housing, transportation, and economic development components of growth. There is an emphasis on water, sewer, storm drainage, transportation, and recreation.

- **Cities' Comprehensive Plans.**

Each incorporated city in Clark County is responsible for preparing a comprehensive plan as part of the Growth Management planning process. Information relating to housing and community development needs from these plans was incorporated into the H&CD Plan.

- **1990 U.S. Census.**

Data from the census provided a base of demographic information about Clark County's population, housing, and income.

- **Housing and Human Service Organizations.**

Housing needs for the homeless and special needs populations were compiled from housing plans and assessments developed by agencies working with specific populations. These groups include the Council for the Homeless, the Area Agency on Aging, the Clark County Developmental Disabilities Program, the Clark County Equal Opportunity Committee, the Southwest Washington Health District, and the Community Choices 2010 Strategic Plan. A complete listing of these sources is located in Appendix B.

- **Continuum of Care Planning Group.**

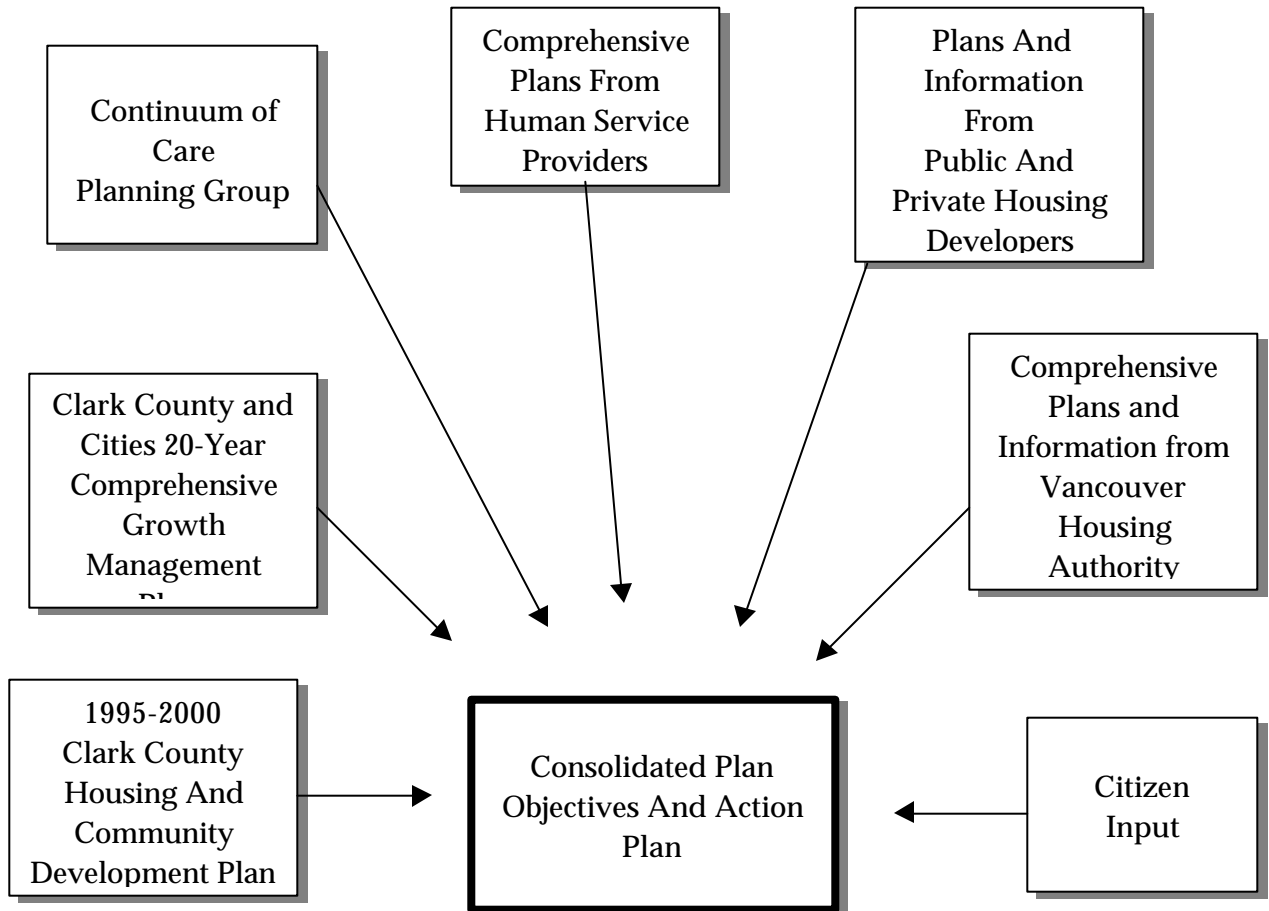
This is a group that meets monthly to develop the Continuum of Care required for HUD applications. The key elements for organization and coordination of the Continuum of Care are four groups that meet regularly and are linked through cross-membership with the Council for the Homeless. In addition to the Council for the Homeless, they are the Continuum of Care Planning Group, Coalition of Service-Providers, and Emergency Shelter Clearinghouse Committee.

- **Other Sources.**

Information about housing market trends was compiled using data from realtors, builders, and a variety of local sources, which track the homeowner and rental costs, vacancy rates, and building activity. Information about Clark County's economic trends

was compiled from local plans and data from the Clark County Department of Assessment and GIS, the Employment Security Department, and from the Columbia River Economic Development Council.

FIGURE 2
Development of the Clark County/City of Vancouver
Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Citizens were offered a variety of opportunities to participate and comment on the development of the H&CD Plan. These include providing input on the needs assessment and objectives of the H&CD Plan, commenting on the proposed use of federal funds from HUD, and responding to the implementation of the funded activities. These opportunities are further described below.

Survey of Housing Needs

The Vancouver Housing Authority's waiting list was used as the basis for distributing a one-page mailed survey to 1,900 households. Recipients were asked about current housing, household size, income, amount paid for housing, and the type of housing they would prefer. Twenty-six percent of the recipients completed the survey. More than one hundred also returned a postcard enclosed with the survey, indicating their interest in attending a public meeting to discuss the H&CD Plan.

Identification of Needs and Priorities for the H&CD Plan

Two public meetings were held with citizens, service providers, public and private housing developers, and public housing residents. Outreach efforts included postcards enclosed with the survey of households on the VHA waiting list and information to public housing residents, minority groups, neighborhood associations, and seniors. Newspaper advertisements, cable television announcements, and flyers were mailed to service organizations for posting. Articles were placed in neighborhood, human service, and public housing newsletters to notify citizens about the public meetings and the availability of the draft for the 30-day comment period. A summary of public comments and ideas is found in Appendix C.

Approximately 80 people attended the first meeting on August 26, 1999, at which childcare and refreshments were provided. After a brief introduction to the process, the participants worked in small groups to identify the barriers to affordable housing and solutions to the problems.

A second meeting was held on October 4, 1999, with 35 people in attendance. Again in small groups, they worked with a matrix showing the current services and the special needs populations being served. Using markers in the amount of the annual budget available from CDBG, HOME, and HOPWA, participants assigned priorities for future funding.

THE THREAD THAT BINDS: A VISION FOR CLARK COUNTY

An integral component of a community's strategic plan is a "vision" statement or scenario, which describes a preferred future. In other words, where do we, as a community, want to be in 20 years? What do we want our community to look like?

In 1997, Clark County joined with the City of Vancouver and health and social service agencies within the county to lead a special community planning project called Community Choices 2010 Strategic Plan. Its goal was to create a preferred future for the county and strategies for achieving this future. The 1995-2000 H&CD Plan was also used as a tool in this process.

The Community Choices project sought ideas from many citizens in Clark County representing diverse social, cultural, and economic groups. Eight core values emerged from this effort which laid the groundwork for the development of the Clark County vision. These are:

- Community is worth struggling to achieve;
- Every individual has value;
- Community builds on individual responsibility;
- No one is an island;
- Everyone has a right to feel safe;
- An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure;
- Effectively coping with change will make the community stronger; and
- Diversity leads to opportunity and strength.

Based on these values, a "vision of life" in Clark County in the next 20 years was developed to guide growth while maintaining a quality of life for its citizens. The focus of this vision is especially applicable to the planning process for the H&CD Plan, since it reflects federal and local goals for decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities. The vision will therefore provide a framework for the remaining chapters of the H&CD Plan and a "benchmark" by which to chart its progress.

"The Clark County of 2010 is a community knit together by a strong sense of belonging, neighbor to neighbor helping, family strength, and respect for individual differences. The County's strong economic base enables individuals and families to achieve a high standard of living with basic guarantees for health and well being. Embracing people of all ages, races, cultures, ability levels and lifestyles is a cornerstone of the community's strength. When individuals and families need help to achieve the quality of life the community has set as its goal, individuals, families, churches, businesses, local government, and agencies pitch in to help."

ORGANIZATION OF THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN

Chapter Two presents demographic information about Clark County, including population, labor and employment, income, race, education and social trends.

Chapter Three identifies Clark County's and City of Vancouver's housing and community development needs by assessing the housing market, the cost of housing, the number of housing units needed, affordable housing policies, and the non-housing community development needs identified by each city and the County.

Chapter Four presents a summary of federal, state, and local housing resources available for housing and community development needs. It also presents the H&CD Plan's Five-Year Strategic Plan for addressing housing and community development needs, including broad-based objectives and proposed activities for achieving the objectives.

The Clark County/City of Vancouver 2000 Action Plan, a specific blueprint of housing and community development activities the County will undertake using federal, state, and local resources is separate document.

Information included in the **Appendices** provide additional details about federal funding programs; outreach efforts for soliciting input; ideas and priorities identified by citizens; a listing of resources used to develop the Plan; additional information about households in need of housing assistance; and information about H&CD Plan consistency verification procedures.